

A Dissertation

on

Police

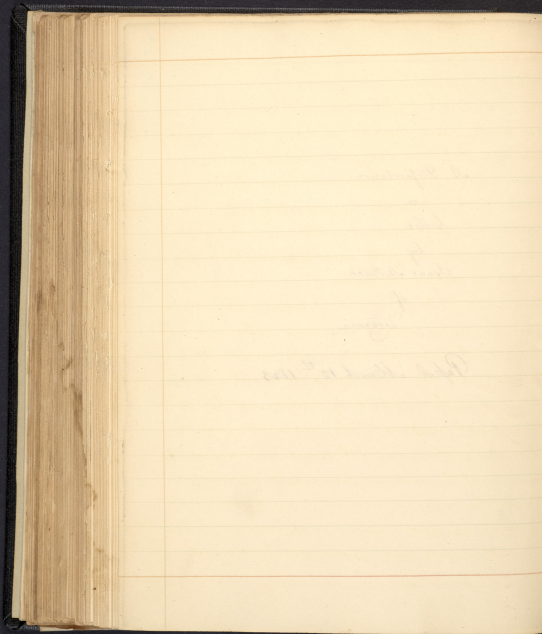
by

Isaac A. Buck

of

Virginia

Read March 12<sup>th</sup> 1823



## Colic

A disease of such frequent occurrence as Colic, it might be supposed was so perfectly understood, as to leave but little room for improvement in the practice. It will not be denied that the energetic employment of the remedies usually recommended will generally relieve it; yet cases sometimes occur in which the most prompt and judicious employment of the ordinary remedies have no effect in arresting the most painful disease.

Having observed the beneficial effects of Emetics in those intractable cases, and seeing but little notice taken of them by writers on the subject, (who if they notice them at all) speak so lightly on the subject, that they rarely impress the student with the necessity of using them, particularly when he sees, that the most disagreeable symptoms of the disease, with which he has to contend, is the rejection of the contents of the stomach, and sometimes even of the intestines by vomiting. For this reason I have selected this disease as the subject of my Dissections, and should it have the effect of awakening the attention of others to the subject, I shall have effected all that I expect.

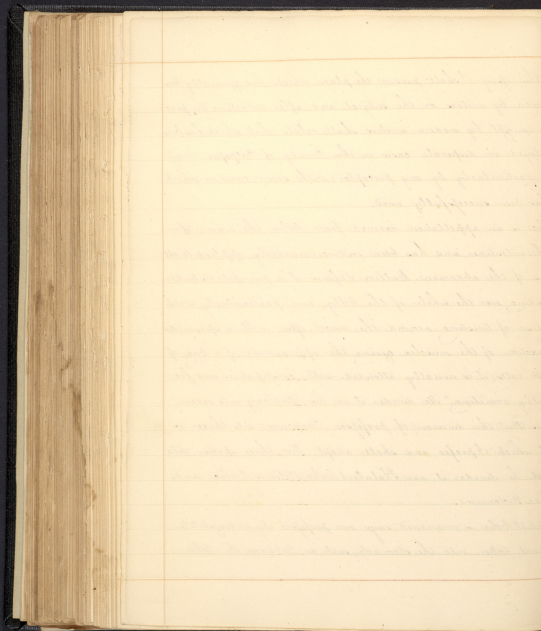




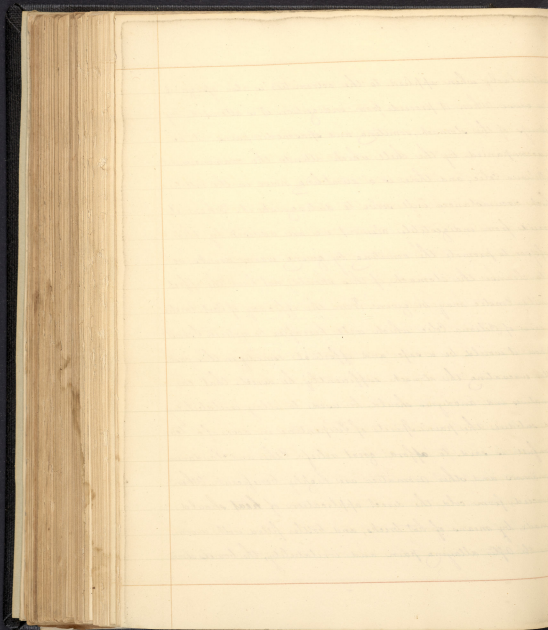
In this essay I shall pursue the plan which has generally been observed, by writers on the subject, and after detailing the practice taught by modern writers, shall relate that which has been employed in desperate cases in the County of Culpeper Virg.<sup>a</sup> (and particularly by my preceptor) with some cases in which it has been successfully used.

*Bolice* is an appellation derived from *belen* the name of one of the intestines, and has been indiscriminately applied to all pains of the abdomen. Cullen defines it "a painful distention, spreading over the whole of the belly, and particularly, with a sense of twisting around the navel, often with a spasmodic contraction of the muscles, giving the appearance of a bag of round balls; it is usually attended with condensation and frequently vomiting." He divides it in his *Pathology* into seven species. But the division of professor Chapman, into three, is that which I prefer, and shall adopt. The three species into which he divides it, are *Flatulent Bolice*, *Obstinate Bolice*, and *Bolice Dictonum*.

*Flatulent Bolice* is occasioned says our professor "by indigestible aliment taken into the stomach, such as Cabbage &c. Cold



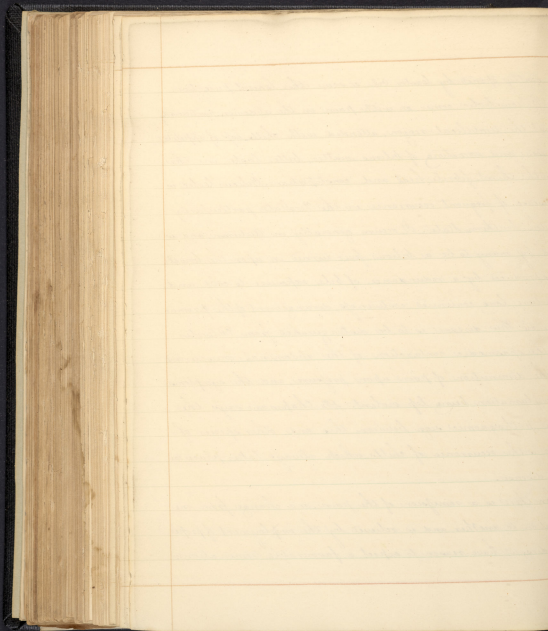
particularly when applied to the extremities is also assigned  
as a cause. When it proceeds from indigestion, it is attended by  
sickness of the stomach, vomiting, and spasmodic pains, it is  
unaccompanied by the chill which attends the commencement  
of Bilious Colic, and there is a rumbling noise in the intestines,  
which circumstances will serve to distinguish it. When it  
proceeds from indigestible aliment we are advised by the  
physicists to promote the vomiting by giving warm drinks, so  
as to cleanse the stomach, if this should not have the effect,  
a mild Emetic may be given. From the efficacy of this Emetic  
in cases of Bilious Colic which will hereafter be noticed I should  
suppose it would be a safe and effectual remedy in this case.  
After evacuating the stomach sufficiently, he directs that car-  
minative and anodyne should be used to allay irritability,  
and subdue the pain. Spirits of Turpentine in doses of a tea-  
spoonfull is said to afford great relief. Ether and Laudanum,  
Cinnamon, and other aromatics are highly beneficial. When  
it proceeds from cold the direct applications of heat should  
be made by means of hot bricks, and bottles filled with warm  
water &c. After allaying pain and irritability, the bowels should



be gently opened by castor oil or some other lenient purgation.

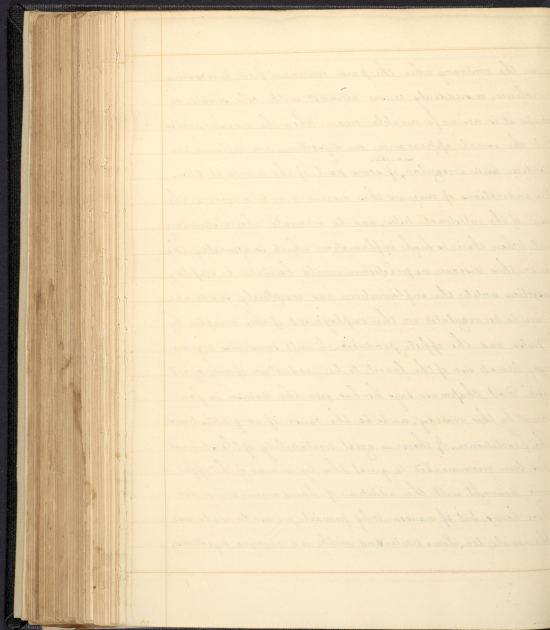
Bilious colic comes on with pain in the abdomen particularly about the umbilical region, attended with chill, loss of appetite, nausea, and vomiting of bilious matter, bitter taste in the mouth, thirst, febrile heat and constipation. Bilious colic is a disease of frequent occurrence in the U.S. particularly in the Southern States. It occurs generally in Autumn, and is said by many to be a bilious fever turned in upon the bowels. It is produced by a redundancy of bile, exposure to cold and moisture, long continued costiveness, derangement of the primæ viæ &c. This disease is to be distinguished from Enteritis by the spasmodic contractions of the abdominal muscles, and by the diminution of pain upon pressure, and the symptoms of inflammation being less violent. Dr. Chapman says the great pathognomonic sign between this and other species of colic is the occurrence of chills which always takes place in this disease.

When there is a remission of the pain, or a change from one situation to another, and is relieved by the employment of proper remedies, we have reason to expect a favourable termination;



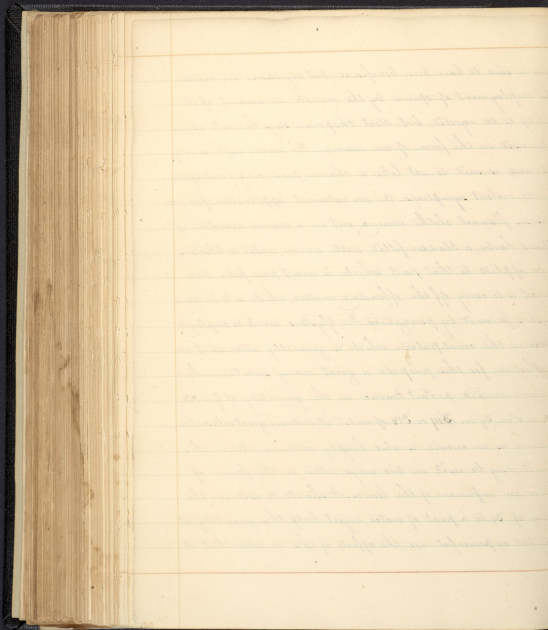
but on the contrary when the pain continues fixed, increasing in violence, or suddenly ceases attended with cold sweats, or sickness, it is an unfavourable omen. When the disease proves fatal the usual appearances on dissection, are inflammation, distention and irregular <sup>in location</sup> of some part of the intestinal tube.

The indications of cure in this disease are, to overcome the spasm of the intestinal tube, and to evacuate the alimentary canal. When there is high inflammation, which is generally the case in this disease, no practitioner would hesitate to employ incision until the inflammation was completely subdued. We are to be regulated in the employment of this remedy by the pulse and the effects produced. It will sometimes require a very liberal use of the lancet, to be productive of any great benefit. Doct. Chapman says he has seen the disease so far overcome by this remedy, as to be the cause of very little trouble to the practitioner. If there is great irritability of the stomach it has been recommended to quiet this by means of the effervescing draught with the addition of Laudanum, every two or three hours, but if nausea only prevails, we are to make use of Chamomile tea, Lime water and milk, and anodyne injections.



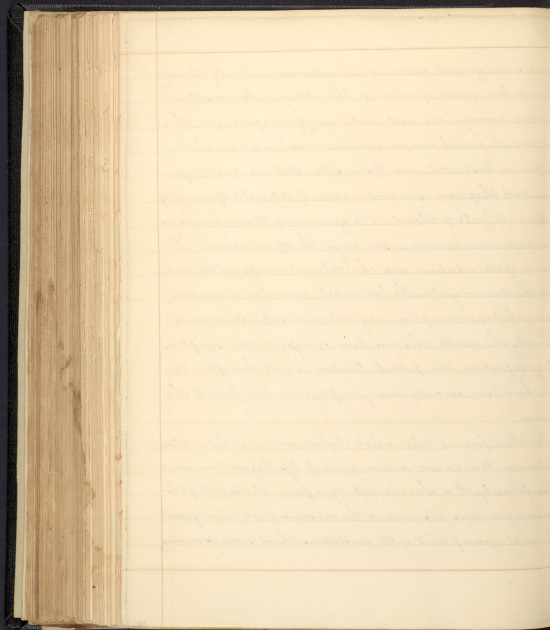


Opium is said to have been beneficial, but objections are made to the employment of opium by the mouth on account of its liability to be rejected, but Doct. Chapman says he would advise it to be used in the form of an enema. The warm bath is very useful, and is said to act like a charm, producing a mitigation of all the violent symptoms. As an external application fomentations, as flannel cloths wrung out in a warm decoction of emollient herbs, a bladder filled with warm water or blisters may be applied to that part which is most painful. Our next object is to carry off the offending matter, which is to be done by glysters followed by purgatives. The glysters are to be employed to overcome the constipation which is generally attendant on this affection, for this purpose a great many substances have been recommended, as Tart. Emetic in the quantity of ℥ss. XX. or XXX. or even ℥j in ℥ij or ℥iv of water, it induces great relaxation. The Tobacco as an enema is also highly recommended in this disease, it may be used in two ways, either in the form of smoke or an infusion of the leaves. It should be used in the quantity of ℥j to a pint of water, inject half this quantity at a time; but so powerful are the effects of this narcotic that it



require the greatest caution in its administration. By throwing three or four quarts of water up the rectum violent constipation has been overcome. We next make use of purgatives, for this purpose the lenient ones are sometimes most useful; as the Lac Sulphuric, Castor Oil and Spoom balls. But the most beneficial says Doct. Chapman is a combination of Calomel & Opium  $\frac{grs. xv}{\text{of Opium}}$  to be given every three or four hours. This combination operates in two ways; the Opium relaxes the spasm of the intestines, and the Calomel sweeps out the intestine and the disease yields. The last article generally recommended upon which we can place any reliance is cast. Turpentine given by the mouth this has been successful when symptoms of mortification were present. Emetics as will hereafter be seen have been advantageously employed in this form of the disease.

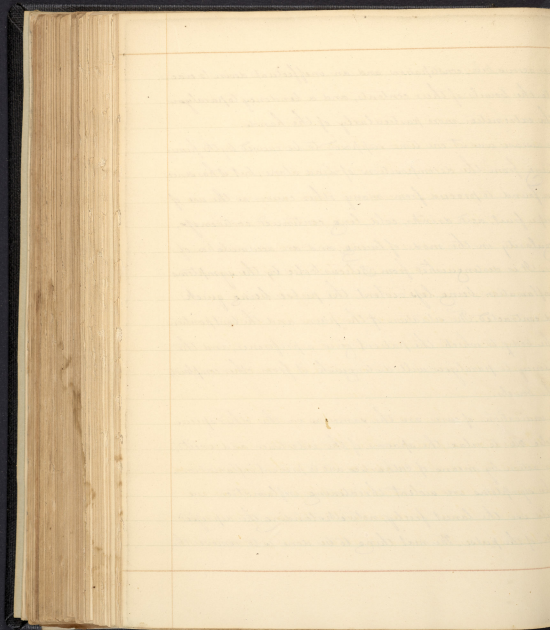
The third form of Colic which I shall notice is that of Colica Pictorum. This disease is said to be of less frequent occurrence than formerly. It is characterized by a pain at the pit of the stomach extending downward to the intestines, particularly around the navel, accompanied with eructations, thirst, sickness, vomiting



of ferruginous bile, constipation and an ineffectual desire to evacuate the bowels of their contents, and a tendency to paralysis of the extremities, more particularly of the hands.

This disease was at one time supposed to be caused by the fumes arising from the decomposition of Lead alone, but it has since been found to proceed from many other causes as the use of unripe fruit, acid drinks, cold, long continued costiveness, irregularity in the mode of living, and an accumulation of bile. It is distinguished from Bilious Colic by the symptoms of inflammation being less violent, the pulse being quick and contracted. The situation of the pain and the best position of the body, to which the patient gives a preference, and the tendency to paralysis will distinguish it from other complaints of the bowels.

The indications of cure are the same as in the other species of Colic viz. to relax the spasm of the intestines and excite their action by means of cathartics, and to prevent inflammation. If the symptoms are violent threatening inflammation we should use the lancet freely, notwithstanding the depressed state of the pulse. The next thing to be done is to remove the



spasm, which is to be fulfilled by the use of water thrown upon the extremities, fomentations, and the plentiful use of Opium, which has been recommended from the idea of the disease being wholly spasmodic; but the combination of Opium and Calomel is to be preferred. The Vol. Tincture of Guaiacum in the dose of a tablespoonfull, Castor Oil, Opium salts, &c will answer very well for the purpose of evacuating the alimentary canal. If these should fail we must resort to anodyne and Tobacco injections, warm bath and the application of blisters to the abdomen. Alum is said to be very useful in the dose of grs. xv every five or six hours. Much has been said of Mercury in this disease, of the efficacy of which we have the testimony of professor Chapman who says that great reliance is to be placed on this article, even to remove the paralysis of the extremities when they occur. The Mercury should be used until salivation is produced. The flannel roller has been recommended to prevent a predisposition to the disease. This constitutes the treatment usually employed in the several forms of Colic. I have before suggested the use of Emetics, which have been frequently found to relieve hopeless cases of the

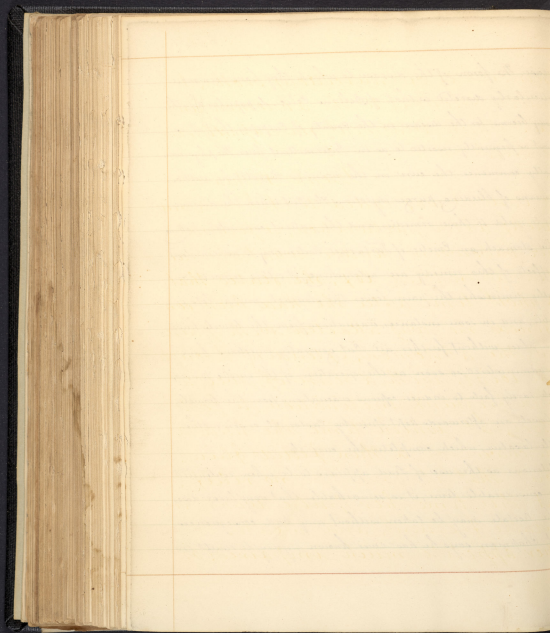


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disease. The form of the disease to which they have been more particularly directed is that of Bilious Colic. so popular has this remedy become for the disease in the County of Outepier, that it is almost as frequently resorted to as in Intermittent fever. The Physicians usually commence the cure in the manner directed by authors, by means of bleeding, purges, injections &c. But when the disease fails to yield to those remedies, and the patient can retain nothing on his stomach, an Emetic of Tartarized Antimony is administered. The effects of this remedy are astonishing, it either removes or greatly diminishes the pain, leaves the stomach much less irritable, and in some instances, evacuations from the bowels have taken place without further aid. But generally injections have been administered so soon as the operation of the emetic is over, which rarely fails to induce copious evacuations from the bowels. The bowels are afterwards kept open by Castor Oil or some other gentle laxative, which completes the cure &c.

Detention as the use of Lead appears to be when continued for a considerable time, it is remarkable that very large doses of the Acetate may be taken without any bad consequences. Doct. Chapman says he has never known injury to result in



principally of nutritious broths, I  
ordered frictions to the abdomen un-  
der which treatment she rapidly re-  
covered.

Joseph Pittman

The Case I was called to S.F. — a few  
weeks after parturition, I found  
her labouring under what she cal-  
led a gnitised lox, she stated that  
a short time after she had been con-  
fined she was attacked with pain  
in the abdomen, extending through  
the loins, with a sense of weight  
and frequent inclination to go to  
stool, at which time she had a  
discharge of a thin fecid fluid;  
but that it gave her no relief;  
at this time her pulse was ir-  
ritable frequent and weak, and  
her appetite much impaired; as

the first of the month, and the  
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the twenty-ninth of the month, and the  
the thirtieth of the month, and the  
the thirty-first of the month, and the

there was no relief from the dis-  
-charge, I thought it proceeded from  
impacted faeces in the large intestine  
and ordered a dose of Ol Ricini which  
-it was to be repeated untill it shou-  
-ld operate; it did not till after sev-  
-eral doses had been given; then a  
large mass of hard faeces which  
melt very bad was discharged she  
said that they melt so bad that  
it caused her to faint; after this  
discharge she soon recovered

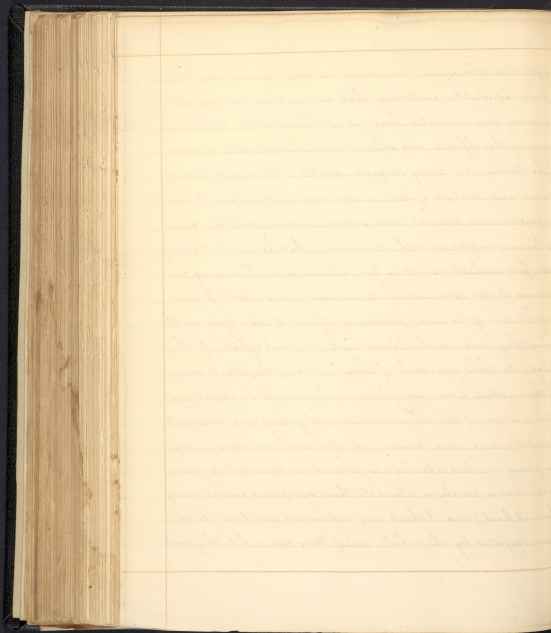
Los Davish

3<sup>rd</sup> Case I was called to see D. of  
a little boy in the family of Capt  
Conner he complained of great  
pain in his bowels with frequent  
inclination to go to stool and would  
strain violently when on the  
chair; he had a thin liquid

the very first time I saw the  
happy children a few minutes  
after I was in the house and  
my name was on the door  
I was to be admitted and I  
I thought it was not a  
very long time after  
I was of that age and  
well very but not  
was this the first time  
I was here I found  
the change the  
the first  
I was called to see  
I was in the family of  
because the company of  
and in her house and  
I was there to see  
the children and when  
I was there I was a

his practice, though he has used it in large quantities. I have  
it from respectable authority, that during the last war while  
the army was in winter quarters at French Mills, & Haliburg  
many of the officers and soldiers were affected with diseases  
of the bowels. An army surgeon resorted to the use of pills of  
Opium and Acetate of Lead in all cases of Dysenteria Cruent.  
His practice was crowned with success in many obstinate cases.  
He became so pleased with the remedy, that he issued it out by  
boxes full without restricting his patients as to the time of con-  
tinuing it. He administered it amongst others to Col<sup>l</sup> J and  
Maj<sup>r</sup> B two of the most promising officers of their grade in the  
army; they were much pleased with the first effects of the  
remedy. He then gave each of them a box of the pills, to carry  
in their pockets, to be used whenever they might be threatened  
with a relapse of the disease. Unfortunately they had occasion to  
use it too long, and became affected with all those dreadful  
symptoms of which the Lead is productive, Excruciating pains  
in the bowels, paralysis, ulcers &c. Those symptoms carried one of  
them at least, (and I think my informant said both) to the  
grave regretted by the whole army. These cases while they point







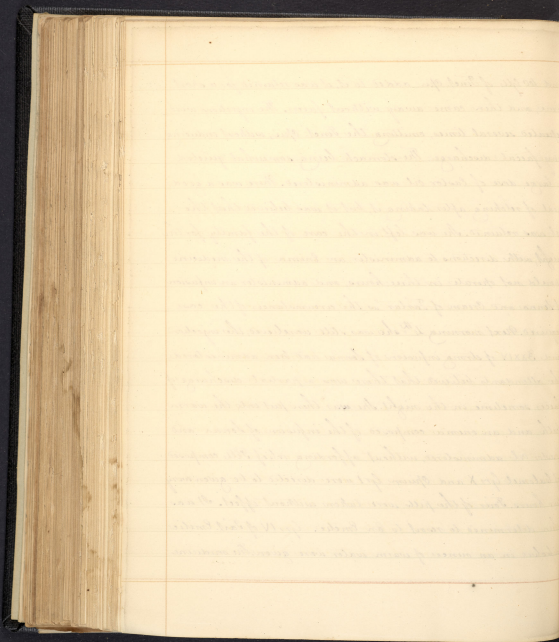
to the importance of Lead, admonishes us against continuing the use of it for any considerable time.

The following are cases in which Emetics have been employed in Colic.

1<sup>st</sup> On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September a strong healthy negro woman belonging to Mr. R. T. of Cuspeper while walking a certain distance from home, was so violently attacked with Colic as to render it necessary to carry her home in a gig. My preceptor was called in, he found her rolling and tossing herself about and crying aloud with pain, and vomiting everything up that was given her to drink. The pulse was not remarkably altered from that of health. On feeling the abdomen, the integuments appeared quite flaccid, and the intestines could be distinctly felt twisting and turning about in the most violent manner. Her arm was tied up, and 18 ℥ of blood taken, afterwards 50 ℥ of Laudanum were administered. The pain and commotion of the bowels were somewhat abated for a short time, but in an hour returned almost as violently as ever. An injection containing Mustard Oil was then prepared

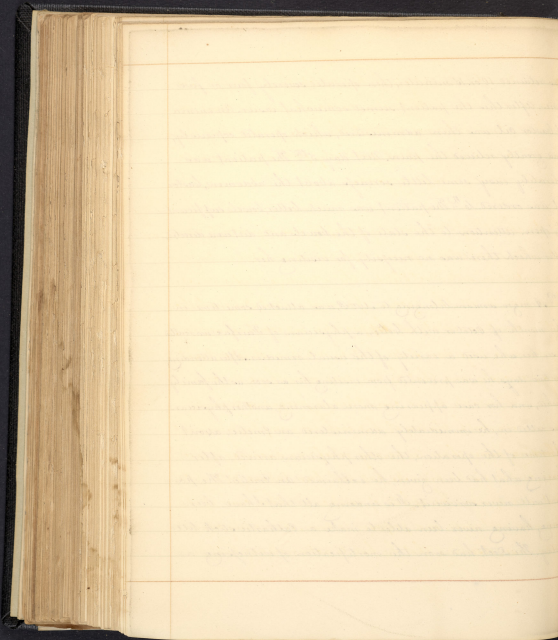


and 60 lbs of Tinct. Opii added to it, it was retained for a short time, and then came away without faeces. The injections were repeated several times, omitting the Tinct. Opii; without inducing any faecal discharge. The stomach being somewhat quieted, a large dose of Castor oil was administered. There was a good deal of retching after taking it, but it was believed that the oil was retained. She was left in the care of the family for the night, with directions to administer an Enema of the medicine should not operate in three hours, and administer an infusion of Senna and Cream of Tartar as the circumstances of the case required. Next morning 4<sup>th</sup> she was still unrelieved, the injections and XXXIV of strong infusions of Senna had been administered, the attendants believed that there was a partial discharge of faeces sometime in the night. She was then put into the warm bath and an enema composed of the infusion of Senna and Castor oil administered, without affording relief. Pills composed of Calomel grs X and Opium grs i were directed to be given every two hours. Four of the pills were taken without effect. It was then determined to resort to an Emetic. grs IV of Tart. Emetic dissolved in an ounce of warm water were given. The medicine



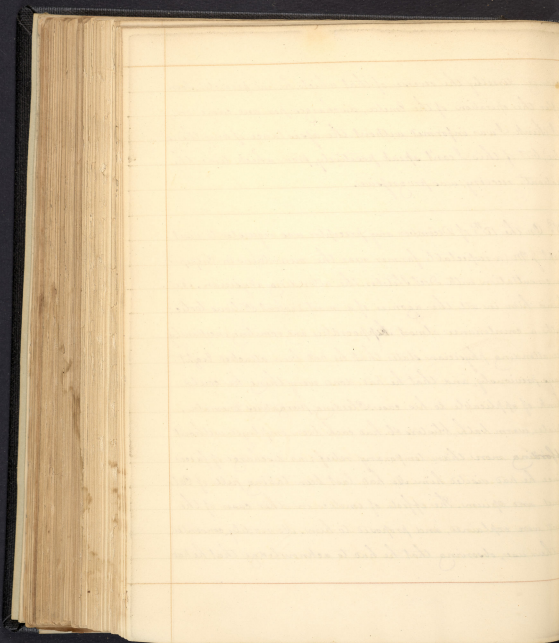
was retained 10 or 15 minutes, then operated severely four or five times. After this the patient seemed somewhat easier. An enema of castor oil was then administered, which operated copiously, and greatly relieved the pain. Next day 5<sup>th</sup>. The patient was tolerably easy some little soreness about the abdomen, castor oil was ordered. 6<sup>th</sup>. The patient was much better, bowels sufficient-ly open. Attention to the state of the bowels and diet were directed, after which there was no necessity for visiting her.

2<sup>nd</sup>. A negro woman belonging to Mr. B, was attacked some time in the month of October with colic, a physician of Fairfax was called to see her, who used a variety of the usual remedies. After attending her two days, he was prevented from visiting her as soon as the family wished, and her case appearing more alarming, another physician was called in, he immediately administered an emetic, about the time of the operation, the other physicians arrived, after hearing what had been given, he exclaimed! An Emetic! The patient will never survive it. It is undoing all that I have been doing, having never been able to make a cathartic stick till today. The Doct. had seen the mortifications of witnessing a



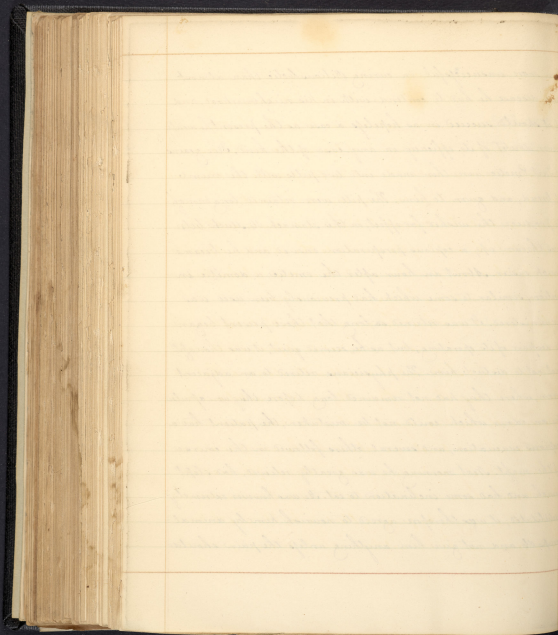
change directly the reverse of that which he had predicted. Soon after the operation of the emetic, discharges per ano came on, (I think I was informed without the assistance of any thing else) but of this I can't speak positively, from which time the patient's recovery was progressive.

3<sup>rd</sup> On the 18<sup>th</sup> of December my preceptor was requested to visit Capt. J. M. (a respectable farmer near the mountains in Cusper) in consultation with Doct. Fletcher, the attending physician. We found him in all the agonies of a most violent Bilious Colic; with a countenance almost ~~stuporatic~~ <sup>stuporatic</sup> and vomiting incessantly. The attending physician states that he had been attacked eight days previously, and that he had done every thing he could think of applicable to his case. Bleeding, purgatives, enemata, opiates, warm bath, blisters &c. had each been employed without ~~affording~~ <sup>affording</sup> more than temporary relief; no discharge of faeces since he had visited him. He had last been taking pills of Calomel and opium. The effects of emetics in other cases of the kind were explained, and proposed to him. He readily consented to their use, observing that he had to acknowledge that he had





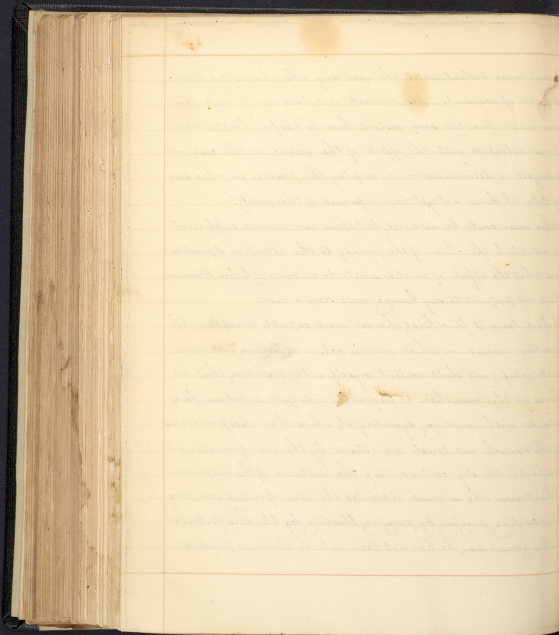
been more unsuccessful in curing Bilious Colic than almost any disease he had to contend with in his neighbourhood, and if it should succeed in as hopeless a case as the present, he would never doubt of its efficacy in any case of the kind. Five grains of Tart. Emelic were then made into two pills with the crumb of bread, and given to him. The pills were retained long enough to produce the wished for effect, on the stomach &c. Much bile was thrown up; a copious perspiration ensued, and he became much easier. About an hour after the emetic, a domestic injection, similar to some which had previously been used was administered. It was retained so long that those present began to despair of its operating, but as he seemed quiet, it was thought best not to disturb him. The physicians retired to an adjacent room, where they had not remained long, before they were apprised by an odour which could not be mistaken, the patient had a copious evacuation, and several others followed in the course of the night. Next morning he was greatly relieved, had slept much and had some inclination to eat. He was however extremely debilitated; it was therefore agreed to nourish him by animal soup &c. and not give him anything unless the pain should



become more violent, until the next day, when castor oil should be given if requisite. His strength improved daily and an occasional laxative soon restored him to perfect health. Doct. F. was delighted with the effect of the emetic in this case and expressed a determination to employ the practice in other cases of Colic, I have not yet been informed of the result.

Other cases could be adduced, but these are deemed sufficient to establish the claim of the remedy to the attention of practitioners. What the effects of emetics would be in cases of *cholera Pictonum* I am not prepared to say having never seen a case.

I shall leave it for others (who are more capable to explain the peculiar manner in which emetics act, in affording such immediate relief,) and shall content myself with observing that no <sup>more</sup> occurs in this case than is frequently witnessed, in bilious fevers attended with vomiting, dysentery &c. where those excessive actions of the stomach and bowels are relieved by the use of emetics and cathartics thereby contradicting the doctrine of the ingenious John Brown who so much ridiculed the idea of curing vomiting by vomiting, purging by purging, bleeding by bleeding &c. Be it as his genius was, he has not been able to change a practice.



which experience has proven so efficacious. <sup>to be</sup> I claim the attention  
of the illustrious professors of this institution, for the many errors  
which they may discover in this juvenile production. I beg  
leave to express to them my gratitude for the indefatigable  
zeal which they have shown in setting forth the correct  
principles of the several branches which they profess. Long  
may they continue in the successful discharge of those im-  
portant duties.

